

MENTAL HEALTH LOCAL ADVISORY COUNCIL

November 10, 2008 - MINUTES

In attendance: Council Members: Chairman Jacob Wagner, Tom Peluso, Kathy Berg, Jan Bjork, Louise Brewster, Shelly Heilweil, Carolyn Robinson and Vickie Groeneweg; Advocacy Member: Dan Ladd (AMDD); Guests: Mary DuVernay (AWARE). Staff: Glenda Howze.

Call to Order and Introductions - 12:10 PM. Chairman Wagner opened the meeting and allowed for introductions.

Public Comment - Mr. Ladd (AMDD) distributed Montana Suicide Prevention cards with the hotline and warning signs. He also provided an update on the AMDD activities. A letter was distributed from Sally Miller, member of the legislative subcommittee. Mr. Ladd stated that if the County needs more crisis beds, this may be an area for which the LAC should be asking the legislature for additional money. He also noted that with gas and energy prices going down, there will be a lot less revenue from Eastern Montana, resulting in a significant impact on the overall revenue for the State. The budget is very uncertain at this time, but if you need something, you need to ask.

Approval of Minutes - Ms. Bjork noted a correction to page 2, third paragraph: "The half-way house, Olive Branch, is not (should be *now*)..." Ms. Bjork made a motion to approve the August minutes as written and the September minutes as amended. Ms. Berg seconded the motion. All voted aye. Motion carried.

Drop-In Center Update/Advisory Board Business - Mr. Wagner reported that it is really nice to see re-occurring folks and new people visiting the center. This is also a good entry point for people new to town. Mr. Peluso stated that the drop-in center offers the only co-occurring AA meeting in the state, once a day. Lori Burgess along with John Watson are working on a NAMI Connections support group. The peer-to-peer group didn't start because there weren't enough people; they need 10 to start a group but 16 is ideal. Ms. Heilweil asked about promoting the group through private practice individuals. Mr. Peluso explained that NAMI is very closed about this information and they don't want to have it modified by private individuals. Ms. Heilweil explained that she didn't want to use the program herself but thought it would be beneficial for her clients to make use of it [at the drop-in center, for example] in order to move their recovery to the next level. Mr. Ladd noted that the State funded five drop-in centers around the state and they are very pleased and excited about how well they have been growing and developing. He stated again that if the funding is not sufficient, additional needs to be asked for. Ms. Brewster stated that the information/program is copy-righted but clinicians would be encouraged to ask clients to join a group.

Report from Chairman Wagner re: Homeless Shelter - Mr. Thomas continues to move forward with the shelter; with hopes that it will be opened in the next 30-60 days. Ms. Brewster asked if Paul has a "need" list that the council could perhaps assist with. Mr. Wagner stated that he doesn't know, but will investigate this for future meeting consideration. Ms. Brewster suggested holding the next LAC meeting at the shelter house and help him fulfill some of his needs. Mr. Peluso explained that he is supported by several churches, uses food from the Food Bank and does his cooking there. He suggested that it would be a good idea for Mr. Thomas to identify his needs in order for others to help in fulfilling them. Mr. Wagner noted that one of the most important things is getting the individuals that come to the shelter plugged into and connected with the resources in the community that they most need; a lot of these folks can and will be productive members of society if they have some tools to use towards that. Mr. Peluso commented on the Family Promise program and how the process works for that program. He suggested that perhaps some of the same services offered at the Family Promise Canterbury House could be duplicated at the shelter;

perhaps Mr. Thomas could make use of the PATH Grant to accomplish this. Mr. Peluso made a motion that we add this as a sub item under the homeless shelter [on the priority table], to investigate using PATH grant funds to provide services to Paul's residents. This motion died for lack of a second. [Mr. Ladd suggested that Marlene Disburg, 444-3356, would be the person to contact about the PATH grant.]

Priority Table Updates - Co-Occurring: ADSGC has a new facility with 7000 square feet. It looks like a warehouse on the outside but has very nice rooms and space inside. The adolescents and adults have good separation, but it is nice to have them located in the same building. **Public Education/Outreach:** Ms. Brewster made note of the recent suicide of Deidre Eitel and suggested that the LAC write a collective letter, perhaps an Op Ed piece to tell people who we [LAC] are and what we do, in line with reducing stigma. Ms. Howze and Ms. Brewster will collaborate on this effort. **Children's Services:** Things in children's services are moving along. The State is looking at the funding issue. Our community doesn't have a grant for the KMA program. [Mr. Ladd noted that there is a meeting at AMDD on 11/17 regarding children's services.] Mr. Peluso commented on the division between adult and children's services in years past and the lack of communication between the two. There are, however, lots of benefits to the separation. Ideally the KMA would be part of the LAC, operating separately but coming together occasionally to keep the lines of communication open and needs evident. Discussion took place with Mary DuVernay (AWARE) regarding their services and the transition from youth to adult. Ms. DuVernay explained that they have worked hard to develop a transitional process so that young adults don't get lost in that crack between the two. Kids become adults at 18 unless they are still in school or have a disability. Mr. Ladd stated that the transition from youth to adult services area is seriously lacking in funds and does need more attention. **Mental Health Campus:** The campus will be located on a 5-acre site, with the building up on the hill. It will be more expensive at this location due to the longer water/sewer connection, but it will allow for more of a community feel with the future transitional housing located nearby. The facility will be designed to allow for 16 beds but initially built for 12. This is being built in partnership with the County, Hospital and Gilhousen Foundation with the Mental Health Center as the operator of the facility. There will be three secure beds with a separate entrance and 9 voluntary, transitional beds. The facility will look like a house, not an institutional structure. Guests will do cooking, attend therapy during the day, be able to have visitors, etc. The planning group is meeting with the architect at the end of this week to review pricing. More funding may be needed based on the price that comes back. Price is also the reason for reducing the number of beds initially built. The design will allow easy construction for space for the additional 4 beds later on. Mr. Peluso also noted that work continues on establishing the guidelines, rules, and regulations for the facility. The requirements will be in line with a BHIF, in some cases even more stringent, so that the operation can be incorporated into a BHIF if they come to fruition in the future. They are hoping to break ground as early as December or more likely in January with hopes of opening a year from now. **Mental Health and Criminal Justice; Mental Health Court:** Ms. Bjork noted that more individuals to training in Salt Lake. There are two "train the trainers" in the Sheriff's Office now and this is moving forward. City court is doing some trials on a diversion model. It is a linkage plan for people with mental illness that have been part of the criminal justice system. They are testing the program with one or two cases. It is not a court, but a plan that involves the police department, County Attorney's office, social workers and others. Mr. Ladd asked Ms. Bjork to keep AMDD in the loop as they are always in search of models for other communities to use, if it is successful. Ms. Bjork explained that this program is an outgrowth of the Jericho Project from Memphis and is a community based, linkage, pre-sentence program.

Other - Mr. Ladd noted that the virtual drop-in center has been a great program, much to the surprise of those at the State that weren't happy about this use of the funds designated for drop-in centers.

Meeting adjourned at 1:16 PM